CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

sub. a4

1. An apparatus comprising:

a programmable controller operative to determine the present state of a system, the programmable controller providing a signal representative of the system state;

a driver operative to generate a control signal in response to the signal provided by the programmable controller; and

a display device operative to provide a visual representation of the state of the system in response to the control signal.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the programmable controller further comprises:

a register for storing programming information;

a port for receiving event information;

a processor operative to generate the signal representative of the system state in response to the event information and the programming information stored in the register;

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the register further comprises:

multiple bits, each bit storing a value of zero or one

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the driver further comprises:

an array of tri-state devices.

5 The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the display device further comprises:

a light emitting diode.

6 The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the display device further comprises:

a array of light emitting diodes, arranged in a matrix.

7. A method of operating a display system, comprising the steps of:

providing event signals representative of the condition of a system to a programmable controller;

generating signals representative of system state in response to the event signals; and

displaying a visual representation of information representing system state in response to signals generated by the programmable controller.

8. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of:

providing programming information to the programmable controller.

9. A programmable display controller for controlling a display device based on event information indicative of a current one of a set of predefined states of a communication system, comprising:

a programmable controller responsive to programming information defining a selected display state associated with each of the states of the communication system, the programmable controller being operative to generate a control signal indicative of a current display state based on the current state of the communication system and said programming information;

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the programmable controller further comprises:

at least one register for storing programming information;

at least one port for receiving event information;

a processor operative to generate a signal in response to the event information and the settings stored in the register;